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Nuclear Power and Nonproliferation: An Interdisciplinary Perspective

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Japanese did and suffered a defeat at Midway. Willmott suggests a third possible strategy for the Japanese: to mount an offensive in the Indian Ocean by taking Ceylon, bypassing India, and attacking the Persian Gulf region with the objective of destroying the Allied position in the Middle East.

Empires in the Balance is well written and intellectually demanding to the point where it is almost impossible to do it justice in a short review. It should be read by anyone who is interested in warfare. Although dust jacket endorsements are usually suspect, Antony Preston's comment on the dust jacket of *Empires in the Balance* is absolutely correct: "There is nothing quite like it in print."

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Potter, William C. *Nuclear Power and Nonproliferation: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*. Cambridge, Mass.: Oelschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1982. 304pp. \$25 paper \$9.95

The subject of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and how proliferation may or may not relate to peaceful nuclear power production, is extremely complex. In order to give a coherent presentation of the field one must be able to deal with subjects as diverse as the technologies for nuclear power production and for plutonium reprocessing, political motivations for acquiring nuclear weapons, the history of attempts to control proliferation, competition in the international nuclear export market, and the trade and technology transfer policies of several major industrialized nations. Further, one must deal with the arcane policy debates within the United States over such concerns as the relative effectiveness of blanket policies of technology denial as compared to

more discriminating strategies in inhibiting proliferation.

Potter's intention is to give us such a presentation; he seeks "to provide a broad, interdisciplinary perspective on the major issues of nuclear power and proliferation. It is intended to serve as an introduction to the field and to provide a reference source for the non-specialist." To a great degree the volume satisfies these objectives in a very satisfactory way. Chapters are devoted to historical, technological, economic, and political aspects of both nuclear power and nonproliferation policies and strategies. Issues are summarized clearly and logically, and the political aspects of nonproliferation control strategies are discussed in a balanced way. *Balance* is too frequently lacking in discussions of nuclear power. To see it in Potter's book is a refreshing change from the many emotional, illogical, and above all impractical discussions that abound in other efforts in this area.

In brief, the author has achieved his objectives in a well-constructed, well-written text and the book is to be recommended from this point of view.

The specialist in this area will find items that he will want to debate. In his historical sections Potter argues that American reactions to nuclear weapons after World War II were to try to "put the genie back in the bottle" via policies of secrecy and denial, and that these policies lasted almost until 1954. Recent research has revealed that Eisenhower, among others, in fact decided very early on that the weapons capability would spread, that the US nuclear capability and weapons dominance was a temporary phenomenon that would degrade rapidly, and that there was not much time available to exploit it in terms of convincing others to develop its peaceful applications. When speaking of nuclear proliferation, Potter does not make a clear distinction between the ability to cause a nuclear explosion and the ability to create a nuclear weapon. The latter is far more difficult and significant than the former; comparison of the cases of India and China could be instructive on this point. The chapter on the economics of nuclear power contains a number of items of interest but in a jumbled order, and treats the issue generally at a broad level of overall demand for electricity and derivative demand for nuclear power. Surprisingly little attention is given to the factors which have increased the costs of nuclear-generated electricity over

the last decade, and decreased its attractiveness, beyond the effects of decreased demand for power generally.

However, these are less important than the question of what the United States should be doing to foster its nonproliferation goals. In this area we are left with a certain lack of satisfaction due perhaps to the very objectivity of the approach which, while commendable in itself, may obscure some important points. Consequently the reader will not find an answer to the key question of whether current US nonproliferation policy is likely to succeed.

To many, the US policies which crystallized during the late 1970s indicated a dangerously naive belief that unilateral US actions could "solve" the nuclear weapons proliferation problem. To a large degree those policies were based upon the belief that US strength in the nuclear field was so great that unilateral action would produce, and perhaps force, compliance of reluctant nations with US desires, and that US law would be accepted by other sovereign nations. These policies collided with the reality of the existence of other highly competent and competitive nuclear suppliers, and in fact unilateral US policy leverage was and is severely limited. In addition, President Carter's view of nuclear power as an energy resource of "last resort" created doubts as to US sincerity and reliability in the nuclear field, and further reduced US influence over others.

Potter reviews the national incen-

tives which drove several nations to develop a nuclear capability, and then raises the fundamental policy problem in a chapter which discusses strategies for control over further nuclear weapons proliferation. He reviews objectively the development of approaches to the nonproliferation problem, and goes to some length to lay out and categorize the various kinds of policy responses that one can take toward dealing with it. But in the end this part of the analysis remains as a catalog of disincentives to proliferation, without specific recommendations for US policy other than the conclusion that in such a complex field there is a "need to tailor nonproliferation measures to specific cases." So the reader who seeks the answer to "What should US nonproliferation policy be?" will not find the answer to his question in this volume.

Nevertheless, this does not distract from the substantial value of the book. While some scoping of possible corrective policy measures, and an assessment of the success of current approaches would add a useful speculative element to an objective work, they are not essential to the non-specialist who is looking for an overview of the field. The failures of certain previous lines of nonproliferation policy seem clear, and the necessity for future international consensus and actions (as opposed to further unilateral US action) should be apparent from this work.

In conclusion, we recommend this work, both for the specialist who will study and evaluate some of the

factors we have outlined above, and for the non-specialist who will find a good discussion of all sides of the problem but not a push in any particular policy direction.

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Johnson, Maxwell Orme. *The Military as an Instrument of U.S. Policy in Southwest Asia: The Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, 1979-1982*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983. 134pp. \$16

Since its inception, the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) has been a topic of heated public debate. Proponents have pointed to it as a sign of US strength and resolve to maintain peace and stability in the politically volatile but vitally important Persian Gulf region. Opponents have attacked it as a military organization that is not rapid, not deployable, and not much of a force. In this volume Maxwell Orme Johnson attempts to cut through the rhetoric to present an objective view of the RDJTF.

Writing from the perspective of a career Marine officer, Major Johnson has done a credible job of presenting a balanced, objective discussion of a contentious issue. The strength of the book lies in his perceptive analysis of the development of the RDJTF and the Carter doctrine which preceded it. Contrary to a widely held public view, he points out that the RDJTF was not a hastily conceived reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Rather, it was a measured calculation